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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4490
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S~~E C R E T~~ SAIGON 42753

NODIS/CHEROKEE

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 91-510
By ___, NARA, Date 6-4-92

SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER ON DUTY DELIVER COPY
OF FOLLOWING TO SECRETARY FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM BUNKER

1. I HAVE BEEN WAITING TO REPORT TO YOU ON THE SITUATION HERE UNTIL WE HAD SOME CLEAR SIGN OF THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THINGS WERE GOING. WE BEGAN TO HAVE SOME SIGNS OF MOVEMENT YESTERDAY, WHICH WERE REFLECTED IN CONVERSATIONS I HAD WITH AMBASSADOR BUI DIEM AND OTHERS IN THE EMBASSY HAD WITH FOREIGN MINISTER THANH AND INTERIOR MINISTER KHIEM. THE REPORT OF CONVERSATION WITH BUI DIEM IS CONTAINED IN SAIGON 42653.

2. THIS MORNING I HAD A LONG AND RELAXED CONVERSATION WITH THIEU, AT HIS INITIATIVE, WHICH CONFIRMED OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE LOG JAM WAS BEGINNING TO BREAK UP AND THAT MATTERS ERE MOVING TOWARD A RESOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTIES WE HAVE BEEN FACING. THE FULL REPORT OF MY CONVERSATION IS CONTAINED IN SAIGON 42751 AND 42752.

3. IT WAS EVIDENT FROM MY TALKS WITH THIEU AND BUI DIEM (WHO INCIDENTALLY HAS BEEN DOING A VERY HELPFUL JOB OF CONVEYING THE MOOD AND SENSE OF URGENCY IN OUR OWN CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION) THAT THERE WAS STILL NEED FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION HERE, BUT THE WILLINGNESS AND DESIRE TO FIND A SOLUTION WAS MANIFEST. THERE WAS ALSO AN AWARENESS OF THE NECESSITY TO DO SO. AS YOU KNOW, CLARK CLIFFORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE CREATED REAL PROBLEMS IN THIS RESPECT SINCE IT APPEARED TO PUT THE GVN UNDER PUBLIC US PRESSURE, WHICH MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THIEU TO ACCEPT A FACE-SAVING FORMULA. NICK KATZENBACH'S NOV 13 STATEMENT WAS VERY MUCH WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED, HOWEVER, AND HAS HELPED MEASURABLY TO MOVE THE SITUATION ALONG. AS I HAVE POINTED OUT IN OTHER MESSAGES, THE QUESTION OF "FACE" HAS PLAYED THE USUAL IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS DELICATE SITUATION. IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT WE FIND A FORMULA WHICH MEETS THE NEEDS OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION HERE, AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO WORK THIS OUT. THERE IS NO QUESTION NOW ABOUT THE STRONG DESIRE IN ALL QUARTERS TO FIND A WAY OUT AND TO GET A DELEGATION TO PARIS.

4. WE WILL BE WORKING OUT THE TERMS OF A FORMULA IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, AND IT WILL BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT DURING THAT TIME THAT THERE BE NO PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON EITHER SIDE WHICH WILL MAKE THIS TASK MORE DIFFICULT. PRESIDENT THIEU AND FOREIGN MINISTER THANH AGREE WITH ME ON THIS POINT AND THIEU SAID THAT HE WOULD SEE THAT THE SITUATION IS KEPT UNDER CONTROL HERE. I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME IN WASHINGTON AS WELL.

5. ONE POINT WHICH THIEU MENTIONED TO ME THIS MORNING WAS HIS DESIRE TO ASSOCIATE THE TROOP CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES WITH WHATEVER STATEMENT IS DEVELOPED BETWEEN US, AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE CAN DO THIS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY; IN FACT THE NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR HIMSELF SUGGESTED THIS TO ME TODAY. THIS IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT PART OF FINDING A FACE-SAVING FORMULA FOR THIEU AND WILL BE WOTH THE ADDITIONAL EFFORT IT MAY REQUIRE.

6. I AM NOW CONFIDENT THAT IF WE CAN WORK QUIETLY ON THE PROBLEM WE CAN BRING THIS DIFFICULT SITUATION TO A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION WITHIN A REASONABLY TIME. I RECOGNIZE, THAT THERE IS MOUNTING PUBLIC PRESSURE IN THE UNITED STATES AND MOUNTING PROPAGANDA FROM HANOI AND THE NLF. BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE FEW ADDITIONAL DAYS WHICH ARE REQUIRED WILL BE TIME WELL SPENT AND I URGE THAT THERE BE NO OVERT PRESSURE EXERTED ON THE GVN DURING THIS TIME. I HOP TO BE REPORTING TO YOU SOON ON THE SOLUTION WHICH WILL RESOLVE THIS MATTER SATISFACTORILY FOR ALL OF US. BUNKER
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